



UNIVERSITY OF  
FLORIDA

IFAS EXTENSION

### **Friday's Feature**

**By**

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### **November Gardening Tips**

Our Gulf Coast weather allows for year round gardening. There is always something to do in the landscape or garden, even during cooler weather. Although the first frost will likely occur in late November to early December, now is a great time to plant trees, shrubs and cool-season annual flowers and vegetables.

November is a good time to establish the cool-season flowering plants to add color to a winter landscape. There are several species that grow well during the winter and flower early in the year. Set out pansies, petunias, snapdragons, ornamental kale and cabbage, dianthus and other cool season plants.

The pansy is one of our best winter annual flowers. It is extremely cold tolerant, able to withstand hard freezes and recover completely. A well established and maintained pansy bed provides color throughout the winter and into late spring.

Cool season vegetables can be started now by planting the seeds of beets, carrots, kale, kohlrabi, mustard, parsley, radish and spinach. If transplants are still available, you have time to plant broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage, collards, kale, leek and onions.

November is also an ideal time for planting hardy shrubs and trees in the landscape. Our relatively mild soil temperatures allow for root growth during the winter. Fall planted woody ornamentals are well on their way toward establishing their new root systems before the stress from summer heat the following year.

With the onset of colder temperatures, be prepared to move tender potted plants inside. Our first frost or freeze usually occurs in November and cold sensitive plants that are left outdoors could be damaged severely. Most tropical plants should not be exposed to temperatures below 40 degrees F.

One of the easier methods of keeping tender potted plants from the cold, while at the same time making it easier on your back, is to build a roll-about plant cart that can be brought in and out of the garage or enclosed patio whenever low temperatures threaten. This allows you to give the plant sunnier conditions during the daytime when temperatures are usually warmer, but then allows for a quick transport into the protected area before night.

November is a good time for an application of horticultural oil spray. Horticultural oils are relatively safe products used in controlling scales, mites and other insect pests found on ornamental shrubs. Follow label directions carefully.

Permanent lawn grasses in Northwest Florida (bahiagrass, bermudagrass, centipedegrass, St. Augustinegrass and zoysiagrass) go dormant in late fall or winter. These grasses grow very slowly and lose color in the fall, and turn completely brown with the first frost. If you want a green lawn throughout the winter, sow ryegrass.

Ryegrasses are popular because of rapid seed germination, fast growth, adaptability, and reasonably low cost. Ryegrass is widely adapted, does well in either sun or shade, and tolerates close, frequent mowing. Once the winter lawn is established however, it will require the same maintenance as the permanent lawn. This includes mowing, watering, fertilizing, and controlling pests. So, seed with ryegrass only if you plan to commit to lawn maintenance throughout the winter.

**Tip of the Week:** If your centipedegrass blades have suddenly developed red tips, don't worry. Centipedegrass will frequently turn red in response to cold temperatures.

Theresa Friday is the Residential Horticulture Extension Agent for Santa Rosa County. The use of trade names, if used in this article, is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product name(s) and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others.